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Local expert on Kennedy murder disputes single-gunman theories

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John F. Kennedy wasn't murdered by one, crazed man 17 years ago in Dallas.

He was "publicly executed as a deliberate act of terrorism" by people acting on behalf of powerful political and business forces.

That is the conclusion reached by Harrison E. Livingstone after 14 years of research into the extraordinarily complex issue of who killed President Kennedy and how and why it happened.

Livingstone is staying with friends in the Monadnock Region, but prefers not to publicize his exact whereabouts.

He claims to refute the finding of the Warren Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald was acting alone and fired three shots at Kennedy from the sixth floor of a building behind Kennedy's limousine.

Since the Warren Commission report, the report of the U.S. House Assassinations Committee has gone along with much of what Livingstone and other assassination experts say, including the contention that more than one assassin fired shots at Kennedy.

However, although the House committee asked the U.S. Department of Justice to pursue evidence suggesting a conspiracy to kill the president, the recommendation apparently hasn't been followed, Livingstone said, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation has said only that some of the House committee evidence suggesting more than one assassin is misleading.

So, Livingstone and other assassination experts are pursuing conspiracy theories.

Earlier this month, one of those experts, David S. Lifton, published a book called "Best Evidence," which concludes that Kennedy's body was

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altered to show that one assassin, firing a rifle from a grassy knoll in front of the presidential motorcade, killed Kennedy.

Livingstone disagrees with that conclusion. He says several assassins fired shots at Kennedy from several directions.

Livingstone is a 43-year-old Harvard University graduate with a degree in law who's now a novelist, poet and playwright. His conclusions about the Kennedy assassination have been published in a periodical called The Continuing Inquiry and in the Baltimore Sun and the Bangor (Maine) Daily News.

He hopes to publish a 400-page book on the assassination.

In a three-hour interview this week, Livingstone gave a basic account of what he thinks happened the day Kennedy was shot in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963, along with what he believes were the motives for a conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

Livingstone said powerful people in the United Stats were opposed to Kennedy's re-election, which appeared inevitable.

Military, industrial, financial and intelligence figures were unable to control Kennedy, Livingstone said. So the assassination was planned in Dallas by what Livingstone calls a "power control group."

The day before the assassination, many members of the "power control group" were in Dallas, including Richard Nixon, J. Edgar Hoover and Texas oil men H.L. Hunt, Clint Murchison and Sid Richardson, Livingstone said.

Dallas Mayor Earle Cabell was the brother of another member of the "power control group," General Charles Cabell, a top Central Intelligence Agency official who'd been fired by Kennedy after the botched Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Livingstone said.

The murder was carefully planned, Livingstone said.

Virtually all members of the President's cabinet were in an airplane on their way to Japan and the plane lacked a code book for communicating with government officials, Livingstone said.

At the instant of the shooting, 12:30 p.m. in Dallas, all telephone service in Washington, D.C., stopped. Livingstone said it was impossible for anyone in Washington to have known of the shooting at that moment.

The House Assassinations Committee found that "presidential protection (in Dallas) that day was uniquely insecure."

The motorcade took a route that violated Secret Service guidelines. It was traveling very slowly through Dealey Plaza. The press bus that normally followed close behind the presidential limousine was moved to the back of the motorcade, Livingstone said.

When shots rang out, Secret Service bodyguards were ordered not to move and the president's limousine failed to accelerate for a period of

about 10 seconds, Livingstone said.

"Kennedy was set up and betrayed from within his entourage. He was driven into an ambush," Livingstone said.

He said there were several teams of snipers in Dealey Plaza, firing at the president from several directions, and said a tape recording of the assassination includes six rifle shots, plus a seventh noise, that disproves the Warren Commission finding that only three shots were fired.

Livingstone said the House committee reported that at least four shots were fired, possibly more.Livingstone believes six or seven shots were fired. He contends that:

—The first shot missed.

—The second shot, from in front of the motorcade, hit Kennedy in the throat.

—The third shot hit Kennedy in the back.

—The fourth shot hit Texas governor John Connally from the back.

—The fifth and sixth shots hit Kennedy almost simultaneously, with the fifth shot hitting him in the back of the head and the sixth shot, from the front, hitting Kennedy in the front of the head.

A piece of shrapnel, apparently from a seventh shot, hit bystander James Tague, according to Livingstone.

Finally, the president's limousine speeeded up, stopped briefly at the entrance to a freeway, and sped to Parkland Hospital.

Parkland doctors found a massive head wound near Kennedy's right temple and a hole in the back of his head, about 2.5 inches wide, Livingstone said.

They also found a bullet entry wound in Kennedy's throat, and that wound was enlarged slightly to insert a breathing tube.

Kennedy died at 1 p.m. Dr. Robert McClelland said death was caused by a gunshot wound to Kennedy's left temple.

Then, in voilation of Texas law, which states that an autopsy must be performed there, Secret Service agents pointed guns at hostpial officials and demanded that the body be sent to the Washington area for an autopsy, Livingstone said.

Livingstone said the autopsy in Bethesda, Md., "was rigged," with inexperienced doctors performing it.

Generals and admirals in the autopsy room ordered doctors not to perform certain procedures, such as tracing the path of a bullet in Kennedy in the back, to see if the bullet exited the body.

That bullet, the so-called magic bullet, became the basis of the Warren Commission's finding that the bullet exited Kennedy's throat and then hit Connally, despite ample evidence to the contrary, Livingstone said.

"Basically, it was a very bad autopsy, and crucial evidence disappeard," Livingstone said.

Livingstone said the chief photographic consultant to the House Assassinations Committee found in a test of a photograph of Kennedy's head that the photograph was forged to conceal an exit wound in the back of Kennedy's head.

Meanwhile, Dallas police arrested Oswald, who Livingstone said was a U.S. Navy intelligence operative who never fired shots at the president, but was "a patsy" for the assassination.

The Warren Commission never conducted an independent investigation of the assassination, Livingstone said. It relied on information from the FBI and CIA.

Why was Kennedy assasinated?

Livingstone said military-industrial-financial powers had several motives:

—Just before the assassination, Kennedy had called for an end to the Vietnam War, a highly profitable war for U.S. industries, according to Livingstone.

—Kennedy was seeking detente with the Soviet Union and was working toward detente with Cuba in secret negotiations, Livingstone said.

—The "radical right" hated Kennedy because of the nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union that slowed development of nuclear weapons.

—Oil companies disliked Kennedy because he had threatened to remove the oil depletion allowance.

—Steel companies had never forgiven Kennedy for his actions against unilateral price increases.

—Kennedy had fired the top command of the CIA after the Bay of Pigs invasion and was trying to get the CIA under control, Livingstone said. Allen Dulles was one of those who were fired and he became a member of the Warren Commission.

—Kennedy was fighting the influence of organized crime in America, and after he was killed, prosecutions of mob figures dropped by 86 percent, Livingstone said.

Since the assassination, Livingstone said people who plotted it have concentrated on clouding the evidence, including publicizing wild theories about conspiracies to confuse the public.

Prime examples, he said, are the Lifton book and an article in Parade magazine last November by G. Robert Blakey, chief attorney for the House Assassinations Committee.

Lifton says Kennedy's body was altered to make it appear that one assassin was firing from behind Kennedy, while Lifton tries to prove that one assassin was firing from the

Livingstone said Lifton's conclusion is wrong and that he ignores a great deal of evidence.

Blakey says in his article that the committee concluded that organized crime figures conspired to kill Kennedy, even though the House committee's report specifically says that organized crime did not plot the assassination.

Livingstone said he hopes that someday, a full, independent investigation of the assassination will reveal the true story of who killed Kennedy.